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Northwest Solar Alliance Helps Move the Northwest Into the Solar Age

'Catching Some Rays' Takes on a Whole New Meaning for Northwesterners, Thanks To the Northwest Solar Alliance

PORTLAND, Ore., March 15 /PRNewswire/ -- Bonneville Power Administration along with the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington and the U.S. Department of Energy's Seattle Regional Office have entered a cooperative effort to make the Northwest a major player in a national initiative to include solar as a vital part of a sustainable energy future.

By signing the Northwest Solar Alliance's "white paper" of purposes, goals and objectives, these charter members have agreed to promote solar energy applications. Solar energy is one area that BPA's utility customers can engage in to qualify for the agency's conservation and renewables rate discount. The proposed rate discount for investing in renewable resources and conservation is scheduled to take effect next year. BPA hopes through its work with the alliance to connect its customers with solar opportunities.

"Harnessing the sun to generate electricity is not cost-effective right now in most applications, but it can be in certain situations," said Terry Esvelt, BPA's Vice President for Energy Efficiency. "We need to take advantage of this clean, renewable resource and increasingly put it to work for the region. We see the Northwest Solar Alliance as an excellent opportunity to help make this happen."

The alliance aims to reduce global warming and other environmental threats through the promotion of solar electricity in the Pacific Northwest. It does this in part by supporting the national Million Solar Roofs Initiative, a federal program to promote the addition of one million solar units nationwide. The alliance also will support Pacific Northwest solar electric manufacturers, installers and consultants, and provide a smooth transition into the solar age. The group is looking to increase in size and impact as it recruits other supporting members.

For BPA, this is the latest in a series of regional partnerships focused on advancing the wise and efficient use of energy. With the demand for power steadily increasing, the agency is actively looking for opportunities that can enhance its ability to meet customer needs and the needs of Northwest consumers.

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